

Notice of Preparation and Initial Study for the Western Aggregates LLC Reclamation Plan

Prepared for:

California State Mining and Geology Board

Prepared by:

EIP Associates

June 2006

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE WESTERN AGGREGATES LLC RECLAMATION PLAN

On the basis of the Initial Study prepared for the Western Aggregates Reclamation Plan project, the State Mining and Geology Board, acting as the lead agency pursuant to the State Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines Section 15050), has determined that the proposed project may have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, the lead agency hereby gives notice that an Environmental Impact Report for this project will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA.

Project Location

The project site is located in an unincorporated portion of Yuba County, California, south of the Yuba River, north of Hammonton-Smartville Road, and approximately equidistant (20 miles) between Marysville and Smartville. The site is situated at the western edge of the Sierra Nevada foothills, approximately one mile south of the south bank of the Yuba River, and north of Beale Air Force Base.

Site Description

The proposed reclamation plan boundary encompassed approximately 1,200 acres. The majority of the project site is characterized by active mining operations, a processing facility, numerous dredge tailing ridges interspersed with waterways and areas of native riparian and wetland vegetation, and small to large siltation and freshwater ponds created by past and ongoing mining activities. Access to the project site is via an access road off of Hammonton-Smartville Road approximately 1 mile south of the mine processing plant. The project site is located within the area known locally as the Yuba Goldfields.

The project site has been historically excavated for materials from above and below the groundwater table. In recent years, the mine has operated in primarily the central and south-central portion of the project site, where above-ground tailing piles have been removed and material has been excavated below the water table creating areas of open water.

The Western Aggregates processing plant is located in the southern portion of the project site where the company maintains processing equipment (crushers, screens, and conveyors, maintenance structures, fuel storage area, and product stockpiles), a scalehouse, a shop building, an above-ground fuel island, and administrative offices. The primary "boneyard" (equipment storage area) is situated in the southwestern portion of the processing plant area. A large Designated Disposal Area (DDA) which serves as the sediment settling pond is situated in the central portion of the site immediately north of the processing area. Product stockpiles are located adjacent to the processing area. While a majority of the site currently contains or historically contained large tailings piles created by extensive gold dredging operations, approximately 30 acres in the southeast corner of the reclamation plan area was unaffected by prior dredging operations and currently supports open annual grassland used primarily for livestock grazing.

Project Description

The Western Aggregates LLC Reclamation Plan has several elements that would be implemented over the lifetime of the mining operations. These elements will be the focus of the EIR's impact evaluation. While the EIR, in keeping with the requirements of CEQA, will not directly address the impact of approved mining activities, implementation of the reclamation plan is tied to these activities. Onsite conditions created by mining operations will serve as environmental baseline conditions from which reclamation plan impacts will be measured. Mining operations as described in the project applicant's reclamation plan application will remove sand and gravel deposits (aggregates) initially to a depth of approximately 85 feet and ultimately to a depth of up to 200 feet below current groundwater elevations, creating a series of discrete lakes partially bordered by vegetated woodlands and dikes or berms with some peninsulas or islands with woodland habitat. As operations approach an island environment, a perimeter mound will be formed around the island, creating a natural protection around the island. Surrounding lake depth will vary with location due to aggregate quality, but would ultimately reach an average maximum depth of 200 feet. Mining operations are proposed to be terminated by approximately 2055, with processing operations continuing until approximately 2060. The actual time frame for termination is dependent on economic factors (e.g. demand and competition), reserves, ultimate mining depths and quality of mined materials. The total aggregate reserve within the reclamation plan area is estimated at approximately 180 million cubic yards.

As described in the Initial Study attached to this NOP, implementation of the reclamation plan will require backfill and final grading to achieve final site reclamation topography. In addition, reclamation will require soil erosion management and monitoring, site preparation, revegetation, and, ultimately processing plant and mine closure. The volume of fill needed to achieve the final site reclamation configuration is calculated to be approximately 5 million cubic yards. This approximates the expected amount of fines generated from aggregate processing operations over the life of the project. As fines are generated, they will be stored in temporary stockpiles prior to their use for site reclamation. The existing and future locations of these stockpiles are near the eastern and western edges of the property, or along lake perimeter benches for future reclamation.

Reclamation will occur concurrently with ongoing mining operations, as operations in a given area are completed and no longer subject to disturbance by ongoing mining operations. Upon completion of all mining operations, removal of plant processing structures and materials, and completion of site reclamation, the project site would consist of non-mined riparian preserve areas around lakes of varying sizes and depths, as well as woodlands, lakes and ponds with sand and gravel islands, and silt bars. As stated in the Western Aggregates LLC Reclamation Plan, the newly exposed island beaches will be subject to natural revegetation and eutrophic development, adding substantial shoreline habitat to maximize habitat potential. These island environments are currently known to support a diverse assemblage of wildlife including deer, beaver, otter, turkey, osprey, and a multitude of water fowl and fish. This approach to retaining established habitats reduces long-term impacts to these existing wildlife communities. Western Aggregates will create shallow benches on the shorelines of lakes and peninsulas to support wildlife habitat and vegetation on 30 percent of the manufactured lake and peninsula shoreline. This percentage can be reduced by up to 10 percent for equivalent existing or manufactured benching on islands. The reclamation end use of the site must be consistent with the Yuba County General Plan.

Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts Identified in the Initial Study

The Initial Study prepared for the proposed project addresses the broad range of potential environmental impacts listed in the CEQA environmental checklist. The project was found to have potentially significant impacts in the following areas:

Air Quality

Activities associated with project site reclamation could result in potentially significant impacts on air quality due to emissions from equipment and vehicles used during reclamation activities and due to dust generated by these activities. These issues will be further addressed in the Draft EIR.

Biological Resources

Even though site reclamation will result in a net increase in wildlife habitat on the project site, proposed reclamation activities could result in potentially significant impacts on biological resources in and adjacent to the project site as a result of proposed backfill, site preparation and revegetation operations. Therefore, this issue will be further evaluated in the Draft EIR.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The proposed project would involve the use, transport, and storage of hazardous materials, which could expose people or the environment to associated risks during their transport, use, storage, or disposal. In addition, silts/fines used for pond revegetation during reclamation could contain forms of mercury that could undergo methylation, thus increasing the potential for mercury bioaccumulation in the environment. These are considered potentially significant impacts and warrant further evaluation in the Draft EIR.

Cultural Resources

Despite the low likelihood of encountering cultural resources on the project site, the possibility remains that buried remnants and isolated surface evidence may exist. Therefore, the potential impact of the project on pre-historic and historic resources and archeological remains is considered a potentially significant impact and will be further analyzed in the Draft EIR.

Required Discretionary Actions

The lead agency is required to follow through with discretionary actions for project approval. The actions necessary for project approval include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Certification of the EIR** - Certification that the EIR, as supplemented, adequately identifies the significant environmental effects of the proposed project, pursuant to CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.
- **Project Approval** – Approval of the Reclamation Plan by the State Mining and Geology Board; and
- **Mitigation Monitoring** – Adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring Plan to reflect the measures required to mitigate significant impacts of the project.

In addition, the following regulatory agencies may be Responsible Agencies:

- **California Department of Fish and Game**
- **State Water Resources Control Board**
- **California Regional Water Quality Control Board**
- **Feather River Air Quality Management District**

Comments Requested

The Western Aggregates LLC Reclamation Plan NOP and Initial Study were circulated for public review and comment on June 27, 2006 for a period of 30 days. All comments on the initial study should be submitted in writing to the State Mining and Geology Board, at the following address no later than **July 27, 2006**:

Mr. Stephen Testa
Executive Officer, State Mining and Geology Board
801 K Street, Suite 2015
Sacramento, California 95814-3528

Upon its completion, the Draft EIR will be circulated for public review and comment for a period of at least 45 days. All written comments on the Draft EIR will be presented in a Final EIR along with written responses to each comment as required by CEQA. After consideration of the Final EIR, the State Mining and Geology Board will hold a public hearing at which time the Board will consider certification of the EIR and approval of the Western Aggregates LLC Reclamation Plan.

Public Scoping Session

A public scoping meeting will be held at the following time and location:

Date/Time: July 18, 2006 at 6:30 PM
Location: Yuba County Government Center
915 8th Street
Marysville, California 95901

All interested parties are encouraged to attend. All substantive written comments submitted on the NOP/Initial Study and those presented during the scoping meeting will be taken into consideration during the preparation of the Draft EIR.

Initial Study for the
Western Aggregates LLC Reclamation Plan

Prepared for:

California State Mining and Geology Board

Prepared by:

EIP Associates

June 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1-1
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	2-1
3. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST	3-1
3.1 Basic Project Information	3-2
3.2 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected.....	3-3
3.3 Determination	3-4
3.4 Environmental Checklist	
Land Use and Planning	3-5
Agriculture Resources	3-6
Population and Housing	3-7
Geology and Soils	3-8
Hydrology and Water Quality.....	3-10
Air Quality	3-13
Transportation/Circulation	3-14
Biological Resources	3-16
Mineral Resources	3-18
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	3-18
Noise	3-20
Public Services	3-22
Utilities and Service Systems	3-23
Aesthetics	3-25
Cultural Resources	3-26
Recreation	3-27
Mandatory Findings of Significance	3-27

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
2-1 Regional Location	2-2
2-2 Project Location	2-3
2-3 Current Mining Conditions.....	2-4
2-4 Current Western Aggregates LLC Property Features and Mining Operations	2-5
2-5 Mining Cross Sections	2-9
2-6 Reclamation Phases	2-10
2-7 Typical Conditions After Reclamation	2-12
2-8 Final Reclamation View.....	2-17

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

This initial study was prepared pursuant to the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (as amended) (California Public Resources Code 21050 *et. Seq.*) and in accordance with the State Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines). The proposed project addressed in this initial study is the implementation of a new reclamation plan to amend the existing reclamation plan for Western Aggregates' surface mining operation located about one mile south of the Yuba River between the communities of Smartville and Marysville in Yuba County, California. This new amended reclamation plan is presented in *Western Aggregates LLC: Reclamation Plan for Yuba County Operations* (April 2005), prepared by the Lilburn Corporation for Western Aggregates LLC, the project applicant. The amended reclamation plan (Plan No. 58-05-01) is referred to in this initial study as the "2005 Reclamation Plan" or the "proposed project" and it supersedes the original reclamation plan (Plan No. 80-01) for areas south of the Linda Levee. The 2005 Reclamation Plan would be implemented concurrently with ongoing mining operations and would comply with the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975. The State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) is the CEQA lead agency for this document.

The SMGB understands that the County of Yuba recognizes Western Aggregates has a vested right to mine the property contained within the boundaries of the proposed 2005 Reclamation Plan. Under this right, mining and materials processing operations and the transport of processed material from the Western Aggregates site are currently ongoing. These continued mining operations are not subject to SMGB approval and are not part of the discretionary action that is the subject of this Initial Study, namely approval of the proposed amended reclamation plan. This Initial Study addresses the potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of implementation of Western Aggregates 2005 Reclamation Plan.

INITIAL STUDY CONTENTS

This initial study contains the following sections:

Section 1: Introduction – This section provides an overview of the initial study, a description of the CEQA review process and schedule for the proposed project, and CEQA lead agency contact information.

Section 2: Project Description – This section discusses the background of the proposed project, project elements, and required entitlements for project completion.

Section 3: Environmental Checklist – This section contains the environmental checklist. The checklist identifies environmental issue areas that could be affected by the proposed project and lists the determination of whether the project's effects on those areas are significant, less than significant with mitigation, less than significant, or have no impact. The checklist also contains the rationale and support for each determination.

Section 3 also presents the determination that, based on the results of the environmental review, the SMGB has concluded that preparation of a project-specific Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is appropriate to meet the environmental review requirements for the proposed project under CEQA.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

This initial study was circulated for public review and comment on June 27, 2003 for a period of 30 days. All comments on the initial study should be submitted in writing to SMGB no later than **July 27, 2006**. In addition, a **public scoping meeting** will be held at the following time and location:

Date/Time: July 18, 2006 at 6:30 PM
Location: Yuba County Government Center
915 8th Street
Marysville, California 95901

All interested parties are encouraged to attend. All substantive comments on the initial study and those presented during the meeting will be taken into consideration during the preparation of the Draft EIR.

Upon its completion, a Draft EIR will be circulated for public review and comment for a period of at least 45 days. All written comments on the Draft EIR will be presented in a Final EIR along with written responses to each comment as required by CEQA. After consideration of the Final EIR, the State Mining and Geology Board will hold a public hearing at which time the Board will consider certification of the EIR and approval of the Western Aggregates LLC 2005 Reclamation Plan.

Please submit all written comments regarding this initial study and Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the project EIR to:

Mr. Stephen Testa
Executive Officer, State Mining and Geology Board
801 K Street, Suite 2015
Sacramento, California 95814-3528

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT LOCATION

This initial study evaluates the environmental impact of implementing the *Reclamation Plan for Western Aggregates LLC, Yuba County Operations* (2005 Reclamation Plan) or proposed project prepared by the project applicant, Western Aggregates LLC (Western Aggregates). The project site is located in an unincorporated portion of Yuba County, California, south of the Yuba River, north of Hammonton-Smartville Road, and approximately equidistant (20 miles) between Marysville and Smartville (Figure 2-1). The site is situated at the western edge of the Sierra Nevada foothills along the south bank of the Yuba River, north of Beale Air Force Base (Figure 2-2).

PROJECT SITE

The approximately 1,200-acre project site's surface and aggregate mining rights are owned by Western Aggregates. The area surrounding the project site is known locally as the Yuba Goldfields. Currently, the surrounding land is mined for gold and aggregate (sand and gravel) and used for aggregate processing. The southern portion of the Yuba Goldfields contains a small tract of undisturbed land that has historically been used for limited agricultural production and cattle grazing. The majority of the project site is characterized by active mining operations, a processing facility, numerous dredge tailing ridges interspersed with waterways, and small to large siltation and freshwater ponds created by mining activities. Access to the project site is via an access road off of Hammonton-Smartville Road approximately 1 mile south of the mine processing plant (Figure 2-3).

The Yuba Goldfields, and several parcels along its southern boundary, are zoned Extractive Industrial (M-2), which was established primarily for the extraction, processing and distribution of minerals occurring naturally as sand and gravel, and the remaining lands surrounding the Yuba Goldfields are zoned Rural Residential (RR), which provides for mixed agricultural, ranching, and low-density residential uses. The Yuba River, north of the project site, is used primarily for recreational activities such as fishing and rafting. The lands to the east of the project site are vacant and used for cattle grazing. The lands to the south and west of the project site, and north of Hammonton-Smartville Road, support aggregate mining by other mining companies, agricultural production, and livestock grazing. Beale Air Force Base is located approximately one mile south of the project site beyond Hammonton-Smartville Road (Figure 2-2). The Yuba Goldfields are surrounded by riparian areas and oak woodlands that support a broad range of native vegetation and wildlife habitat, as well as annual grasslands that provide foraging areas and cover for many common wildlife species.

The Western Aggregates processing plant is located in the southern portion of the project site where the company maintains processing equipment (crushers, screens, and conveyors, maintenance structures, fuel storage area, and product stockpiles), a scalehouse, a shop building, an above-ground fuel island, and administrative offices (Figure 2-4). The primary

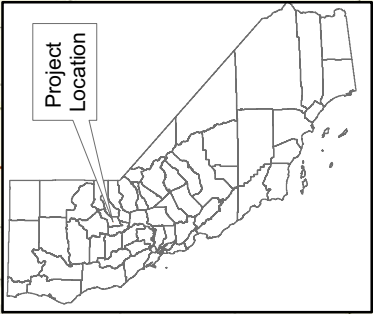
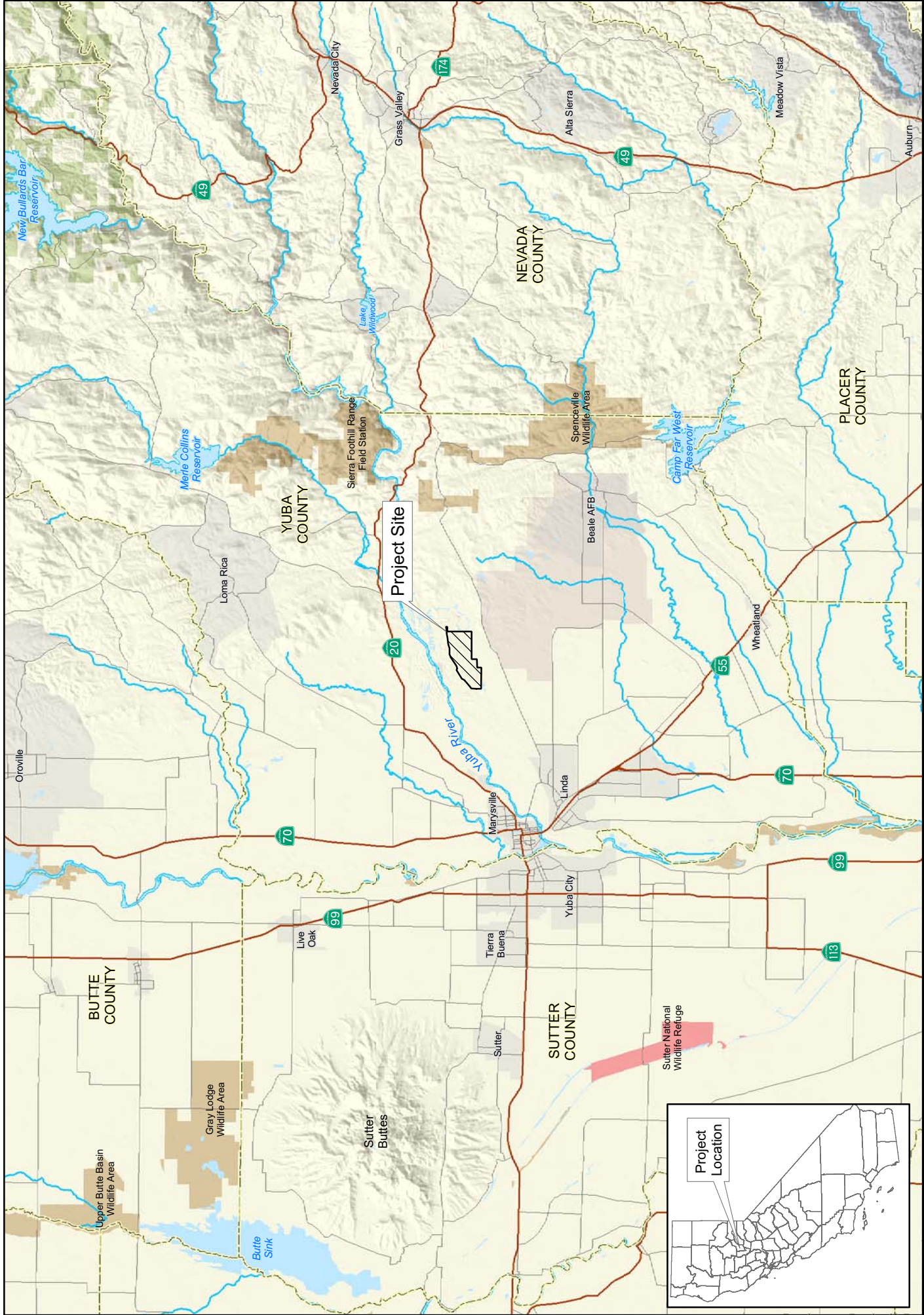
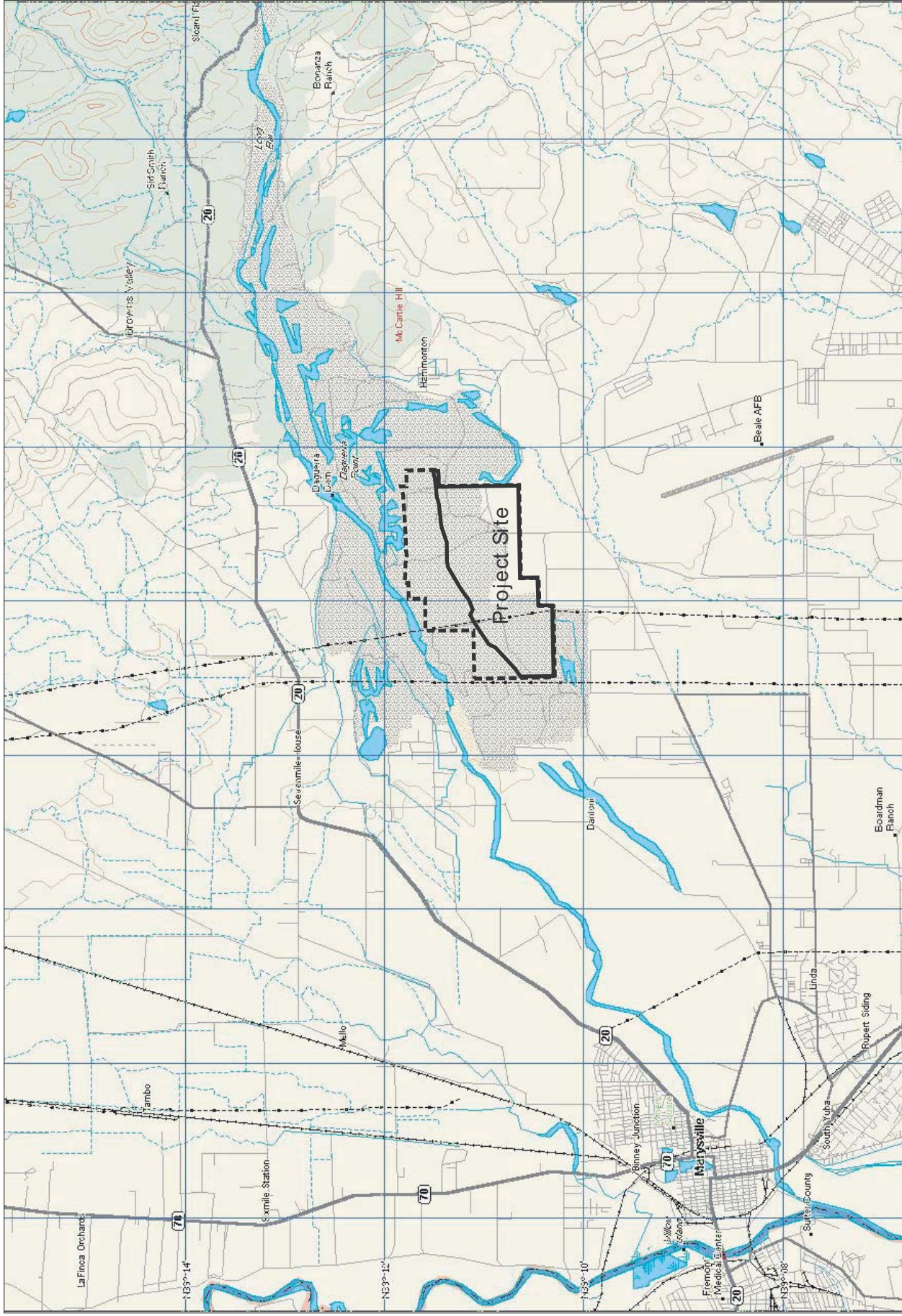


FIGURE 2-1

Regional Location

Source: CDFG, County Boundaries, 2005; USGS, Hydrography, 1998; ESRI, Transportation, 2002.



10764-03

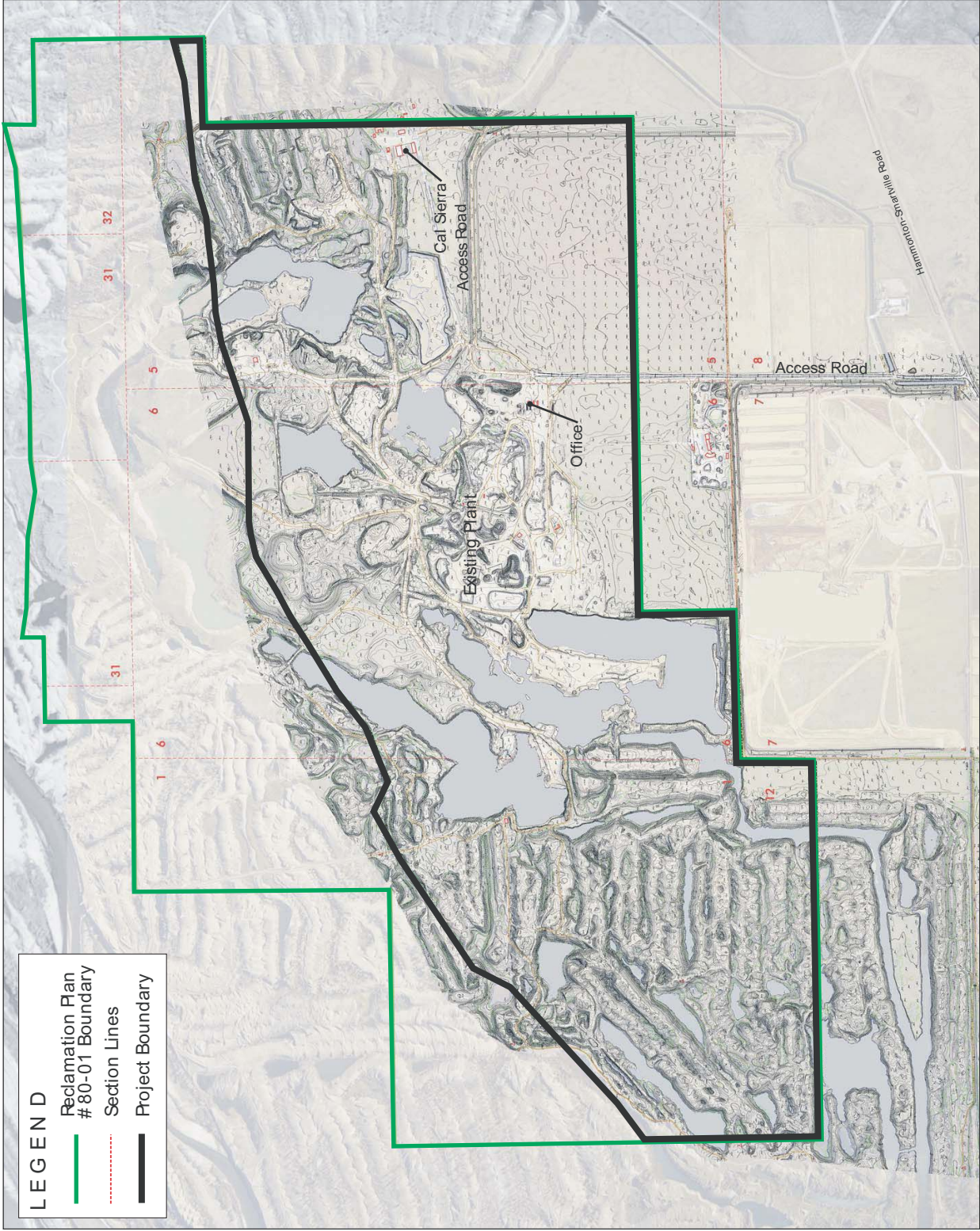
FIGURE 2-2
Project Location

Source: Lilburn Corporation 1999.

Scale: 1 Mile



California State Mining and Geology Board



Aerial Photograph: 03-09-2004/12-01-2004. Topography: Mackay & Samps. 02-01-2005.

FIGURE 2-3
Current Mining Conditions

Source: Lilburn Corporation

Not to Scale



California State Mining and Geology Board



10764-03



FIGURE 2-4

Current Western Aggregates LLC Property Features and Mining Operations

Source: Lilburn Corporation



10764-03

“boneyard”¹ is situated in the southwestern portion of the processing plant area. A large Designated Disposal Area (DDA) which serves as the sediment settling pond is situated in the central portion of the site immediately north of the processing area. Product stockpiles are located adjacent to the processing area.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Yuba Goldfields consists of approximately 10,000 acres and are named for gold dredging operations which commenced in the early 1900s. Dredging the ancient river channel for gold resulted in thousands of acres of tailing mounds found throughout this section of the Yuba River. Due to the plentiful supply of these tailings, the project site has been mined for aggregate using various techniques since the early 1900s.

In 1980, Western Aggregates’ predecessor-in-interest applied for and was granted approval for a reclamation plan by the County of Yuba, in accordance with the requirements of the SMARA. The application included a reclamation plan and narrative responses to a standard SMARA questionnaire. The California Geological Survey (Division of Mines and Geology) assigned Mine ID #91-58-0001 to the project site. In 1993, the Office of Mine Reclamation (OMR) reviewed reclamation plans in Yuba County to determine if mines were operating under approved and updated reclamation plans. Subsequently, OMR determined that Yuba County (the SMARA lead agency) had approved a reclamation plan and notified Western Aggregates. Mine ID #91-58-0001 was listed in the OMR’s July 1, 1993 Compliance List, and has been on this list since that time.

In December 2002, the annual SMARA mine inspection for Mine ID #91-58-0001 was conducted by the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB). Based on the results of the SMARA mine inspection performed in November 2002, it was revealed that the original reclamation plan, although adopted in accordance with the SMARA standards in 1980, did not meet current SMARA standards. Western Aggregates subsequently prepared a reclamation plan, completed in April 2005, to substantially upgrade the existing plan. The 2005 Reclamation Plan modified the scope and extent of the 1980 plan to include the creation of a series of various sized lakes to serve as habitat for native wildlife. The 2005 Reclamation Plan updated certain aspects of the existing reclamation activities to incorporate an updated revegetation plan and a hydrologic report, and documented existing conditions at the mine site when the amended plan was prepared. The 2005 Reclamation Plan does not preclude future mining on the project site.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Western Aggregates has proposed reclamation of the project site to a variety of open water and wildlife habitats through the implementation of the reclamation plan. Reclamation is intended to enhance and compliment the aesthetic value of the site that was significantly altered as a result of gold dredging operations since the early 1900s. The objectives of the project applicant in implementing the proposed plan are to:

- update the scope of the reclamation of the project site, relative to reclamation currently required under RP 80-01, to meet current SMARA standards;
- contour mining features and revegetate disturbed areas at the site to minimize aesthetic, biological, and hydrological impacts;

1 A boneyard is an area used to store old equipment and machinery for parts and scrap metal.

- conduct reclamation concurrently with mining operations;
- create Emergent Marsh area (approximately 25 acres), Riparian Woodland area (approximately 3 acres), and Riparian Upland area (approximately 20 acres) identified in the reclamation plan;
- restore the Western Aggregates site to open space, consisting of a series of lakes and native habitat; and
- reclaim the property to a usable condition for post-mining end uses.

Additional objectives identified in the proposed reclamation plan include:

- allow the continued mining of aggregate resources in the approved areas detailed in the reclamation plan so that resources can be recovered efficiently and economically;
- provide for the reclamation of the project site for a productive second use in accordance with the requirements of SMARA;
- provide for the restoration and reuse of all mining areas in a manner that is compatible with existing and planned land uses on and around the project site at the time of adoption of the reclamation plan and consistent with SMARA;
- minimize significant adverse environmental effects of proposed reclamation activities; and,
- reclaim the site as necessary to eliminate residual hazards to public health and safety upon completion of mining and processing activities on the project site.

Reclamation Plan Elements

The 2005 Reclamation Plan prepared by the project applicant serves as the basis for describing the proposed project in this initial study. Unless otherwise noted, the project-specific information presented in the following section is taken from the reclamation plan.

The proposed project has several elements that would be implemented over the lifetime of the mining operations. Mining operations would remove sand and gravel deposits (aggregates) initially to a depth of approximately 85 feet and ultimately to a depth of up to 200 feet below current groundwater elevations, creating a series of discrete lakes partially bordered by vegetated woodlands and dikes or berms with some peninsulas or islands with woodland habitat. As operations approach an island environment, a perimeter mound will be formed around the island, creating a natural protection around the island. Surrounding lake depth will vary with location due to aggregate quality, but would ultimately reach an average maximum depth of 200 feet. Mining operations within the 2005 Reclamation Plan boundary are proposed to be terminated approximately 50 years from approval of the Reclamation Plan. The actual time frame for termination is dependent on market conditions and other economic factors (e.g., demand and competition), reserves, ultimate mining depths, and quality of mined material.

The following discussion describes the anticipated conditions on the project site as approved mining operations are completed. These conditions are important because they represent the environmental “baseline conditions” used in this initial study to gauge whether or not implementation of the proposed reclamation plan will have a significant impact on the environment.

The project site has been historically excavated for materials from above and below the groundwater table. In recent years, the mine has operated in primarily the central and south-central portion of the project site, where above-ground tailing piles have been removed and material excavated below the water table creating areas of open water.

Currently, aggregate material is delivered to processing stockpiles at the processing plant via conveyors or off-road heavy haul vehicles. At active mining locations, excavators load aggregate material onto a conveyor system or into haul vehicles for delivery to stockpiles at the plant. When excavation extends below the groundwater surface elevation, excavators and clamshell dredges are used to mine aggregate up to depths of up to 85 feet below groundwater levels.

The total reserve within the reclamation plan area is estimated at approximately 180 million cubic yards. Western Aggregates will continue to employ the mining methods described above; however, when excavation exceeds a depth of 85 feet below the groundwater elevation, a bucket line dredge, suction cutter dredge or other excavation equipment will be used (Figure 2-5). The maximum depth of surface mining operations will be approximately 200 feet below average groundwater levels, but in no event will excavation exceed a depth of minus 125 feet mean sea level. Wet mining operations will create areas of open water in several areas of the project site.

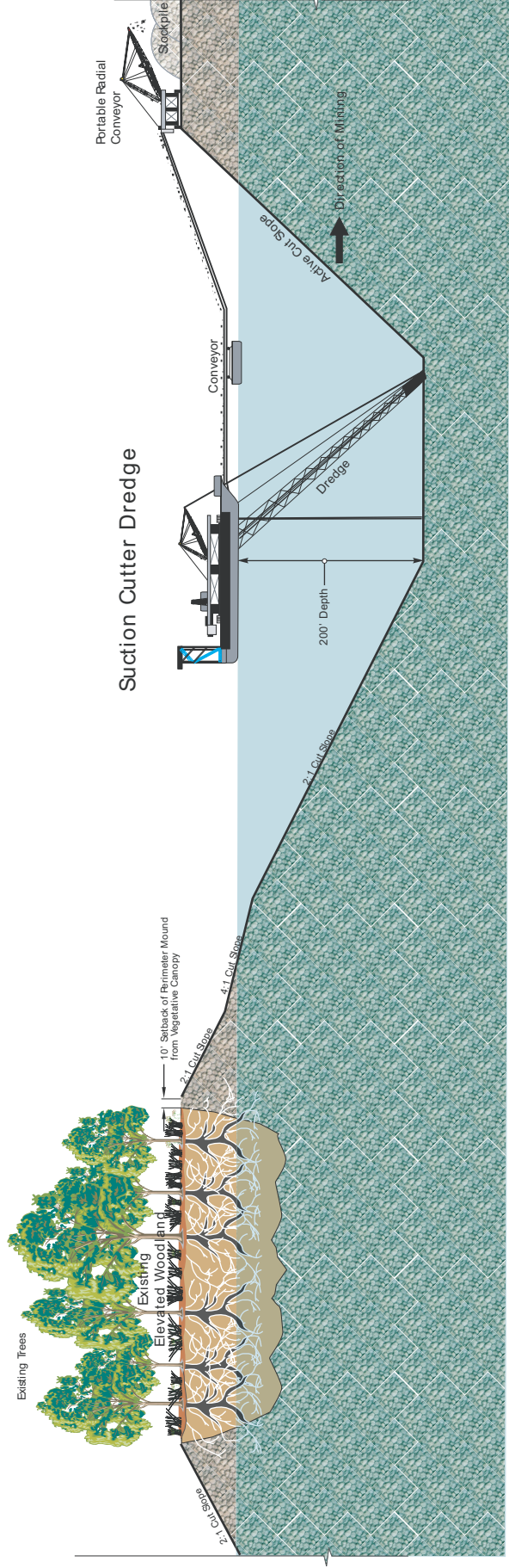
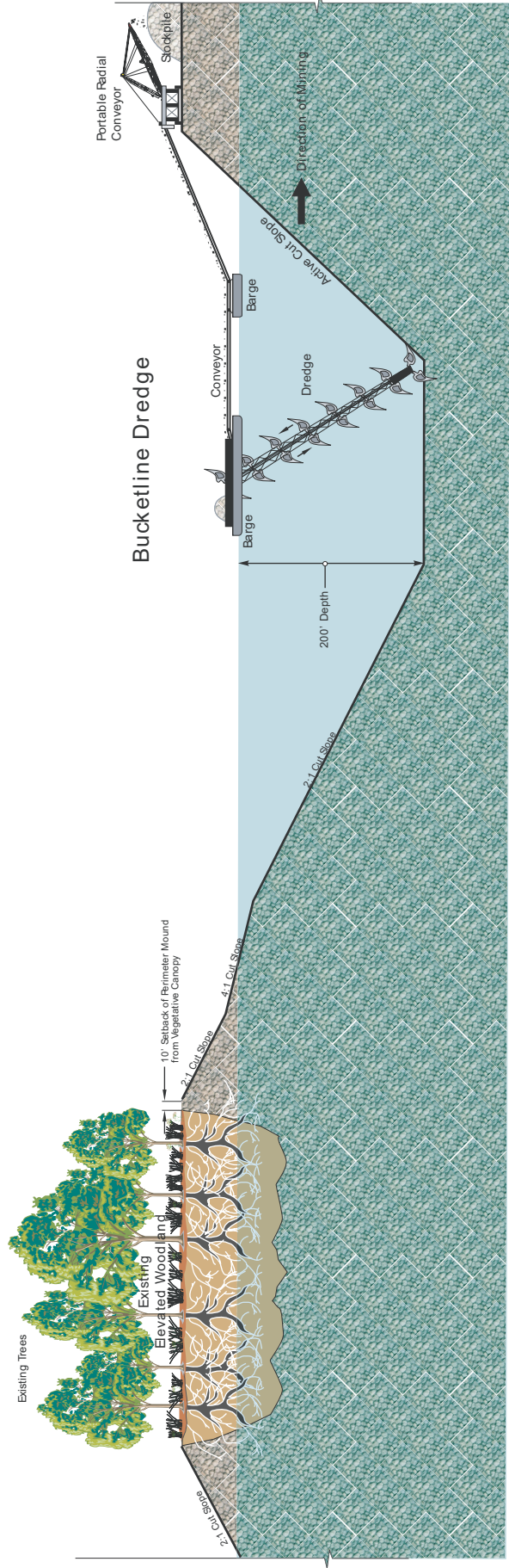
The volume of fill needed to achieve the final site reclamation configuration is calculated to be approximately 5 million cubic yards. This approximates the expected amount of fines generated from aggregate processing operations over the life of the project. As fines are generated, they will be stored in temporary stockpiles prior to their use for site reclamation. The existing and future locations of these stockpiles are near the eastern and western edges of the property, or along lake perimeter benches for future reclamation.

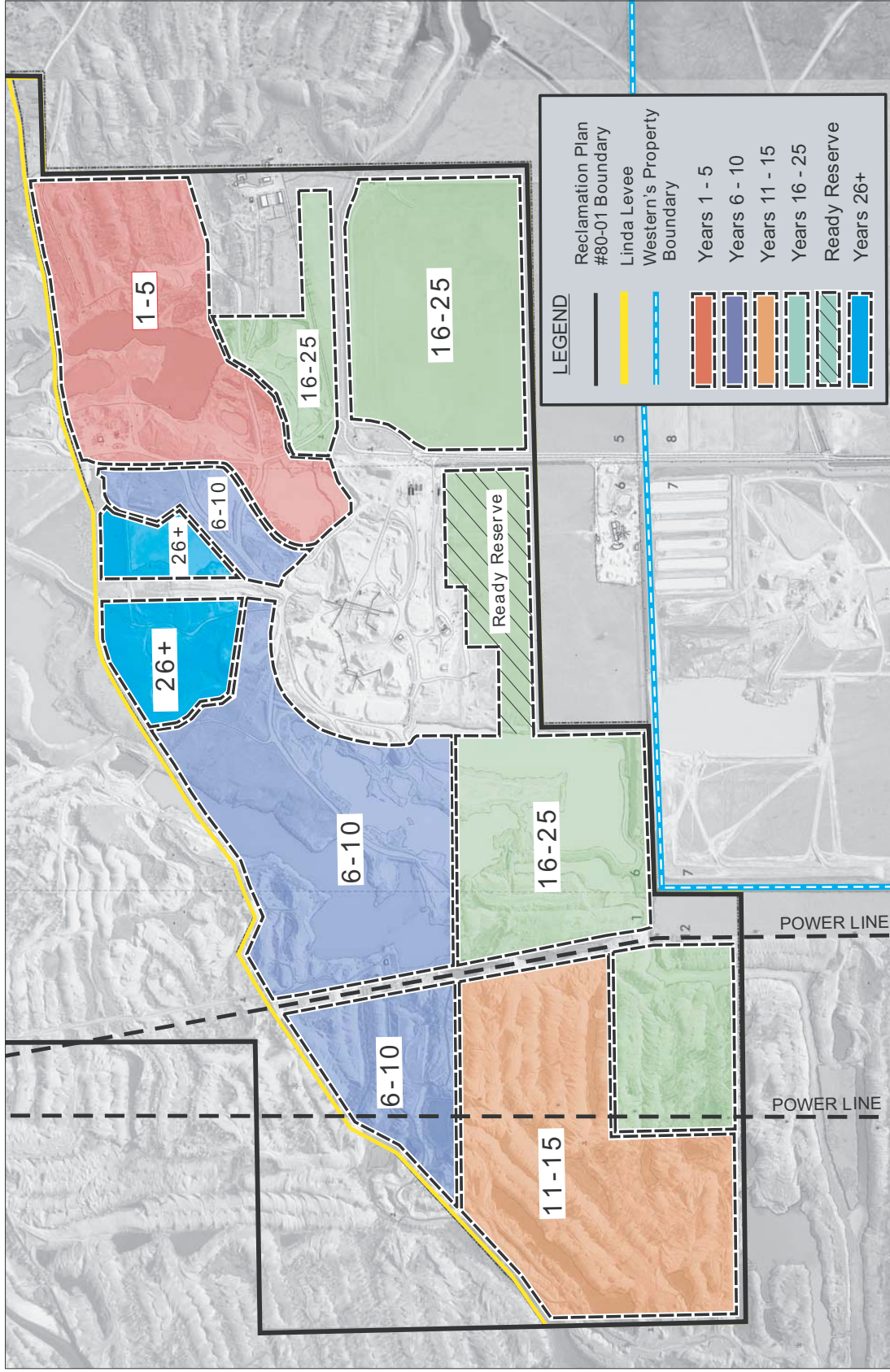
Mining operations will occur in phases. Reclamation of mined areas will occur concurrently with mining operations as discussed in detail below.

Phasing

Mining operations will be conducted in separate phases based on locations of viable aggregate material locations and operational considerations, in accordance with the 2005 Reclamation Plan. Figure 2-6 depicts the locations and characteristics of the phases. Reclamation will occur concurrently with mining operations within each phase as mining in specific areas is completed. Revegetation plantings, with native grass/forbs and woody trees and shrubs will be done as outlined in the reclamation plan's revegetation plan. As each subsequent phase of mining is completed, newly reclaimed areas will be connected to previously reclaimed areas in the same phase, thereby constructing contiguous areas of habitat in various stages of development.

The timing for the completion of each phase of reclamation may vary depending on market conditions, quality of mineable materials, ultimate mining depths, and acquisition and coordination with other mineable properties. The estimated length of each mining phase could range from 5 to 15 years. Specific habitat acres to be created in the final phase of reclamation will depend on the amount of sediment or "fines" recovered throughout the mining process.





Not to Scale



FIGURE 2-6
Reclamation Phases

Source: Lilburn Corporation



10764-03

California State Mining and Geology Board

Aggregate removal advancement will occur in five-year increments, for the next 15 years, according to an aggregate phasing plan developed by Western Aggregates. Current aggregate removal occurs on approximately 35 acres during a one year period up to a maximum depth of 200 feet. For planning purposes, approximate potential future phases are also identified for years 16-25 and years 26 onward. An approximately 50-acre portion of the area described for years 16-25 is also referred to as ready reserve. This is intended as a necessary alternative in the event the dredge fails to operate and conventional mining techniques are employed for a period during repairs. This area could be utilized at anytime during the 15-year planning period. If the area described as ready reserve is not mined during the first 15 years, it will be mined as part of the years 16-25 phase. A total of approximately 1,200 acres of the Yuba Goldfields would be mined and reclaimed within the 50 year projected planning period.

The first five-year phase, depicted in Figure 2-6, reflects recovery of dredge tails at the eastern plant perimeter (Figure 2-7), and allows for the creation of a permanent shoreline typical of the final reclaimed site. At a time specified by the SMGB, but not less than two years prior to completion of a five-year phase, Western Aggregates will submit to the SMGB, an updated 15-year phasing map reflecting any reclaimed areas and a detailed anticipated phasing scenario for the next 15 years in five-year increments at the same level of detail as the current phasing information. In addition, to the extent warranted by market conditions, site geology or other factors, Western Aggregates may complete or otherwise discontinue mining in a particular phase in a time period of less than five years. Under such circumstances and prior to the completion of an abbreviated phase, Western Aggregates will submit to the SMGB an updated 15-year phasing map reflecting reclaimed areas and a detailed map of the next 15 years at the same level of detail as the current phasing information. Western Aggregates would begin final reclamation activities necessary to establish the surface features proposed in the plan concurrent with final aggregate removal by phase, including any areas subject to phases of less than five years.

Site Preparation for Reclamation

All temporary roads utilized only for mining operations will be decompacted and revegetated or mined through and reclaimed as part of a lake. Roads to be retained for access or revegetation efforts shall be identified on the five-year phase maps. Upon final reclamation in any phase, all structures and equipment will be dismantled and removed from the site covered by that phase. Any concrete foundations will be broken up and buried on site. Processing areas, stockpile areas, and areas where structures were located will be decompacted and revegetated. Monitoring wells and water wells will be abandoned in accordance with applicable local ordinances and standards.

Plant communities to be developed at the site are largely determined by proximity to water, which is, by extension, a function of elevation. The habitats to be created have varying water requirements, and thus will be most successful at appropriate elevations. Equipment will be used during mining operations to create slopes, terraces and benches, level final elevations, and contour slopes where necessary. As stated previously, all roads for mining operations will be reclaimed or mined, and for reclamation or revegetation activities will be maintained for future maintenance and observation activities.

Slopes

Slopes surrounding the perimeter of excavated areas will be shaped at 2:1 to 4:1 (horizontal to vertical (H:V)) slopes; the 2:1 slopes of the mining plan are expected to be stable, and meet or

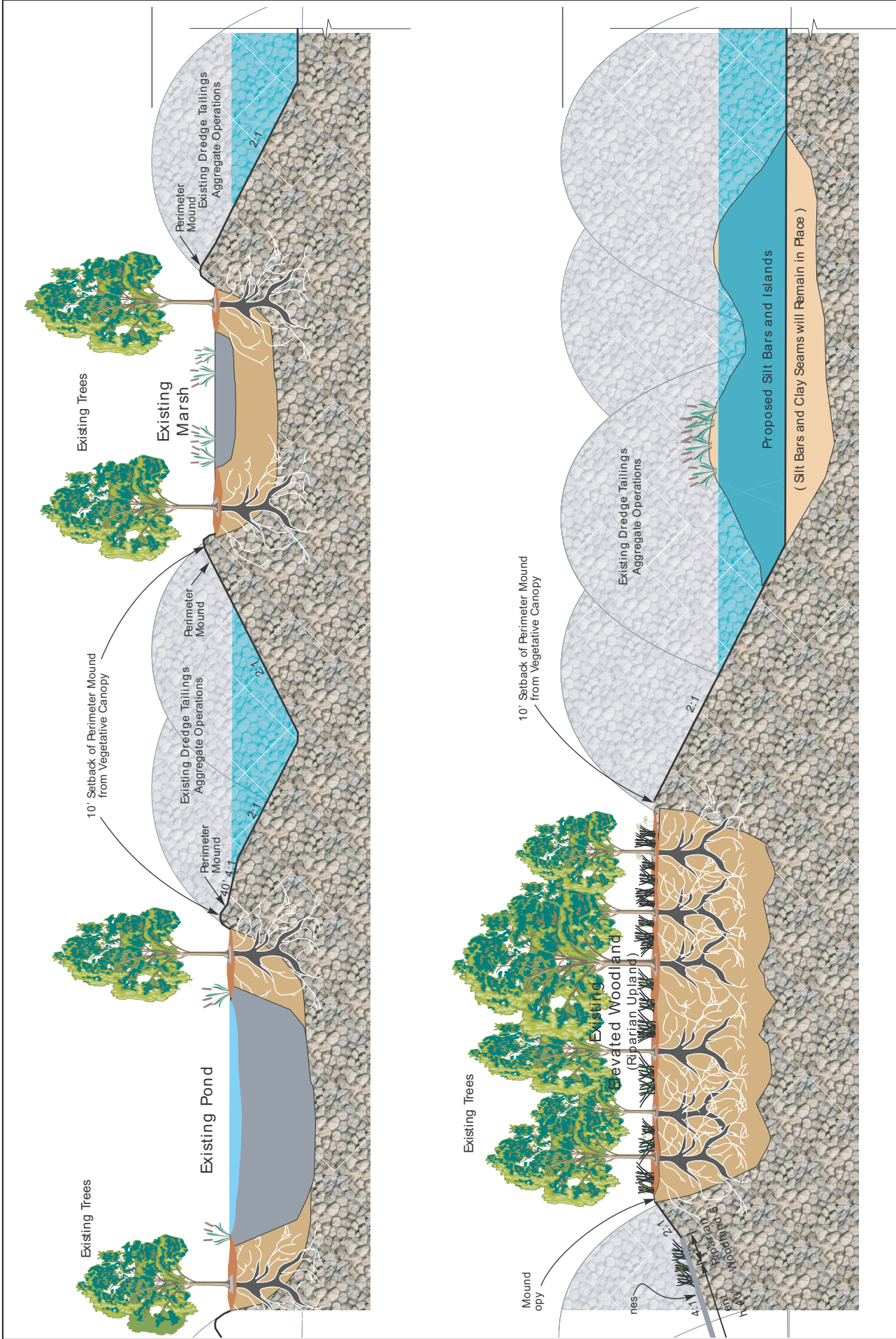


FIGURE 2-7
Typical Conditions After Reclamation

Source: Lilburn Corporation

California State Mining and Geology Board

Not to Scale

exceed established State seismic safety standards. Thirty percent of new slopes generated will be 4:1 slopes and will be revegetated.

Settling Ponds and Sediments

Settling pond activities will continue onsite for the life of the operations. The pond(s) is typically located within the processing area and is sometimes moved as needed to accommodate operations. To the extent necessary the processing activities produce clay or fine silt (fines) which are deposited into a settling pond. The fines settle out and the water allowed to evaporate or percolate. The fines will be used for resoiling the site for revegetation purposes. Other uses of the fines may include processing into saleable products.

Soil Erosion Management

The proposed project will implement erosion control measures on slopes where fines are used to facilitate revegetation. Straw mulch will be applied onto the surface of the contoured slopes. To further minimize erosion, constructed roads will be graded during mining operations so that they are tilted away from slopes.

Erosion Control Monitoring

As a direct result of erosion, rills (raised areas of sediment deposits) form when eroded sediments are transported by runoff and then deposited in a concentrated area where flow is high.

Long-term erosion control would be achieved through revegetation of the mined slopes. The erosion control measures would be monitored by Western Aggregates and corrective measures would be employed throughout the reclamation monitoring period of each reclamation area or segment.

Soil Stockpile Enhancement

Settling pond fines are generally lacking any organic material or nutrients, but are still suitable for some wetland plants that are adapted to less than ideal conditions such as willows, cottonwoods, and cattails. In previously undisturbed areas, silt overburden will be stockpiled for use in manufacturing peninsulas and islands in the newly formed lakes. When mining in a given area is completed and access roads are no longer needed, the areas will be scarified to a depth of approximately 18 inches and the stockpiled soils will be spread onto scarified surfaces at a minimum depth of 6 inches in preparation for planting.

Contaminants and Mine Waste

Materials generated by mining operations on the project site include aggregate that is processed for shipment offsite and silt/fines. There is no waste product associated with aggregate processing. Mined aggregates and fines are sold and trucked off-site as products. The silt and overburden fines generated by mining operations will be retained on site to the extent necessary to be used as soil for use in reclamation plan revegetation.

The excavation and restoration methods do not require the use of toxic hazardous substances with the sole exception of diesel fuel, oil, and lubricants required for the operation of excavators, loaders, dozers, and haul trucks and transformer oil. Refueling will be performed either at the

processing facility fuel island or by mobile fuel trucks. Only minor maintenance and repairs not involving the use of lubricants, solvents, grease or compounds will be performed at the excavation site. Equipment and machinery repairs requiring the use of lubricants, solvents, solutions, grease or compounds will be performed at the maintenance shops. Protection of groundwater will be assured through the following performance standards:

Performance Standards

1. Western Aggregates shall maintain the site and operations free of environmental hazards and the operator shall enforce good housekeeping standards and Best Management Practices (BMPs).
2. Western Aggregates shall provide a copy of its Business Emergency Plan.
3. Western Aggregates shall provide to the SMGB a copy of the RWQCB-issued General Activity Certificate and/or its Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan (SPCCP).

Reclamation Plan Site Preparation

As required by SMARA, all salvageable topsoil would be removed as a separated layer from areas to be disturbed by mining operation. However, because the site is composed of dredge tailings, there are limited quantities of topsoil present at the site to meet this need. Reclamation would use fines from the wash processing at the plant. The fine material retained for the purpose of revegetation will be protected from wind erosion and the growth of weeds by storage in a silt pond area and through erosion control measures described previously.

It is common to find mine site substrates to be highly compacted and, therefore, unsuitable for reestablishing plant cover. Following final grading, surface soils would be decompacted by ripping or disking to allow plant root development. Particular attention would be given to areas that have become compacted through movement of heavy equipment or other site activities. Stockpiled fines would be distributed to revegetation areas and would be spread over the substrate of the revegetation area, and then ripped to break up the substrate and mix the soil/growth media into the upper layer of the substrate. Additional fines could be used along shoreline areas of the lakes if vegetation is slow to develop. There would be no importation of soil for reclamation purposes.

Processing Plant and Mine Closure

Upon final reclamation in any phase, all structures and equipment will be dismantled and removed from the site covered by that phase (subject to re-entering the site covered by a phase to mine to a greater depth, as described in the reclamation plan. Any concrete foundations will be broken up and buried on site. Processing areas, stockpiles areas, and areas where structures were located will be decompacted and revegetated. Monitoring wells and water wells will be abandoned in accordance with applicable local ordinances and standards.

Revegetation

The mining operator would commence with final slope grading and vegetation upon completion of all extraction activities in any given area. All disturbed flat areas and pond/lake setback areas of the project site will be revegetated according to the information provided in the 2005 Reclamation Plan's revegetation plan. The revegetation of the project site would provide habitat

for fish and wildlife, and is based on the character of the surrounding areas and characteristics of the property, available fines and site topography. Amenities that enhance or facilitate interim habitat will be created for fish, birds, and other terrestrial and aquatic species.

Revegetation of the project site will consist of three different habitat communities: Emergent Marsh, Riparian Woodland, and Riparian Upland. The typical conditions for these communities are shown in Figure 2-7. The revegetation requirements for establishing these communities are detailed in the 2005 Reclamation Plan, which describes methods of establishment, general planting locations relative to final elevations, species types, and densities. Planting densities were determined based on several factors, including expected success, ultimate plant size, potential of natural recruitment, and desired level of maintenance.

Final elevations relative to groundwater levels will be the primary determinant of which plant associations or communities are appropriate for a given area. In some instances, water levels may be altered around isolated ponds. Therefore, a mixture of plant species that vary in moisture requirements would be planted in those areas most likely to experience fluctuations in water levels.

The performance goals for the final revegetation are as follows: the emergent marsh is to have 50 percent cover with a species richness of five native emergent species per 200 square meters squared; the riparian woodland is to have 30 percent cover with a species richness of eight native species per acre, a density of 150 native trees and shrubs per acre, and 60 deer grass plants per acre; and the riparian upland is to have 75 percent absolute cover, comprised of native woody species, grasses, and forbs.

Maintenance and Monitoring

The 2005 Reclamation Plan addresses several factors, such as weed competition, that could affect the success of the proposed revegetation plan, and presents maintenance and monitoring procedures that address these factors. Pursuant to SMARA, the SMGB has the responsibility to inspect the site annually and provide a written report to the operator. As the site is mined and reclaimed, reports covering implementation, maintenance, and monitoring of these areas will be prepared and submitted annually by Western Aggregates to the SMGB and other responsible agencies. Revegetation monitoring will be conducted annually for a minimum of five years with at least two years without human intervention. Failure to achieve the performance standards at the end of the monitoring period will require remedial measures and further monitoring until the revegetation performance standards have been achieved.

Weed control will be conducted by Western Aggregates using a variety of methods as required, including hand removal, mechanical removal, herbicides and biological predation. Annual spring monitoring will be conducted on the active mine area and the reclaimed areas. If weeds exceed 10 percent of vegetative cover in the reclaimed area weed control measures will be initiated. Weeds in operations areas will be controlled if weed levels exceed non-mining areas on adjacent property.

Site Access

The project site is accessible via Hammonton-Smartville Road to Hammonton Road, which continues through the entrance of the project site to the processing plant. Traffic from reclamation activities would occur concurrently with mining operations. Reclamation traffic would increase the current level of traffic from mining operation, but for a short period of time each year for the duration of the mining operations. Traffic associated with reclamation

activities would not include heavy equipment or large trucks. Traffic would involve primarily personal vehicles for reclamation workers and trucks used for seed/plant deliveries and irrigation equipment.

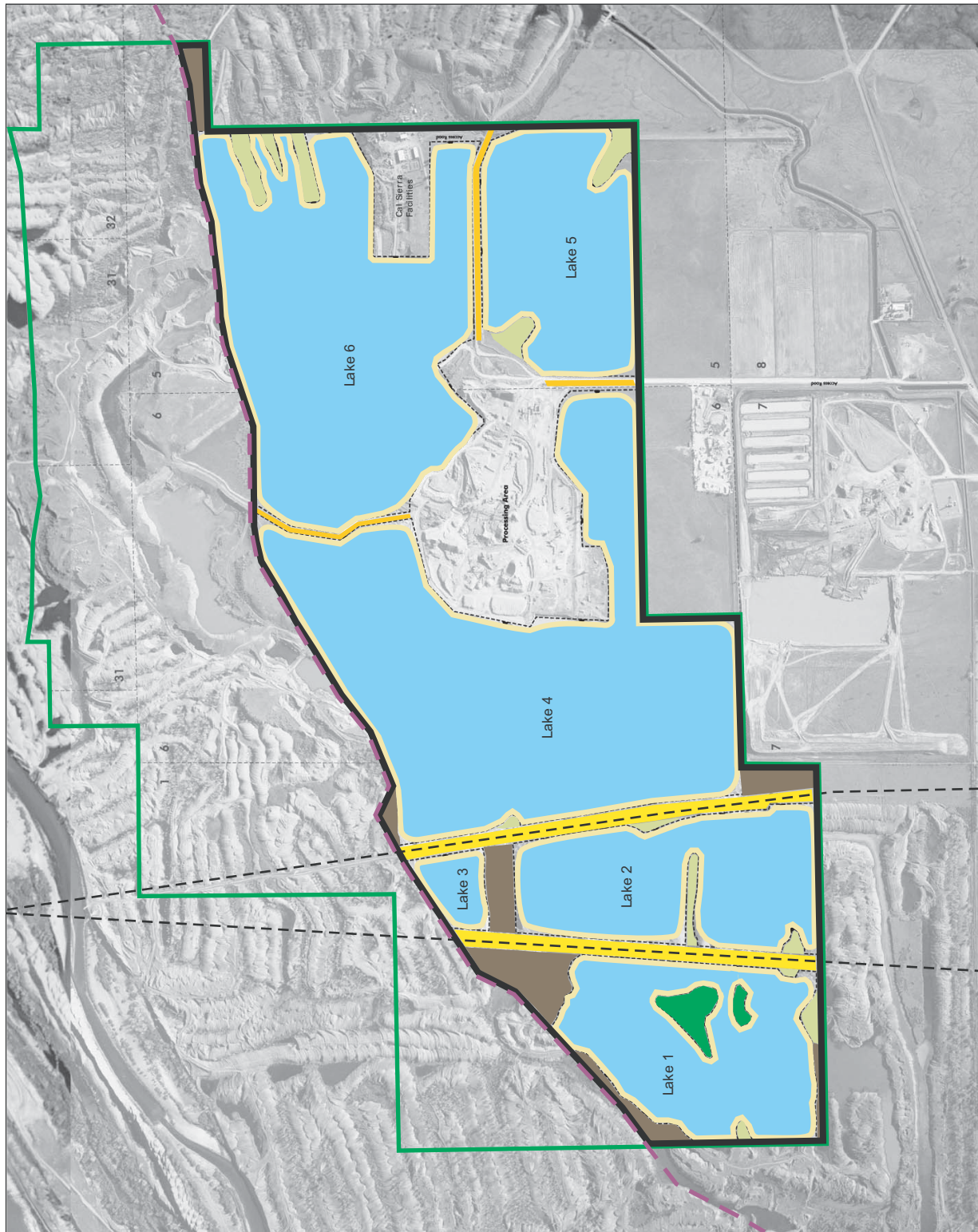
Proposed Reclamation End Use

Upon completion of mining operations and removal of plant processing structures and materials, the project site would consist of non-mined riparian preserve areas around lakes of varying sizes and depths, as well as woodlands, lakes and ponds with sand and gravel islands, and silt bars (Figure 2-8). The newly exposed island beaches will be subject to natural revegetation and eutrophic development, adding substantial shoreline habitat to maximize habitat potential. These island environments are currently known to support a diverse assemblage of wildlife including deer, beaver, otter, turkey, osprey, and a multitude of water fowl and fish. This approach to retaining established habitats reduces long-term impacts to these existing wildlife communities. Western Aggregates will create shallow benches on the shorelines of lakes and peninsulas to support wildlife habitat and vegetation on 30 percent of the manufactured lake and peninsula shoreline. This percentage can be reduced by up to 10 percent for equivalent existing or manufactured benching on islands. The reclamation end use of the site must be consistent with the Yuba County General Plan (YCGP).

Permits and Approvals

As a public agency principally responsible for approving the 2005 Reclamation Plan, the SMGB is the Lead Agency under CEQA, and is responsible for reviewing and certifying the adequacy of the environmental document and approving the proposed project. It is anticipated that the SMGB would consider approval of the proposed project upon review and adoption of the EIR and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan.

No other permits, easements, licenses, or certifications have been identified as being required from federal, State, or local agencies for approval and implementation of the Reclamation Plan.



Aerial Photograph: 03-09-2004/12-01-2004

LEGEND

- Proposed Lakes
- Internal Islands
- Peninsula
- Land Bridges
- Access Road
- Woodlands
- Shore Line
- Utility Easement
- Linda Levee
- Section Line
- RP 80-01
- Project Boundary

FIGURE 2-8

Final Reclamation View

10764-03

Source: Lilburn Corporation

Not to Scale

EIP
ASSOCIATES

California State Mining and Geology Board

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

3. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

INTRODUCTION

The following section contains the environmental checklist form. This form is fashioned after that presented in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. **Section I** of the form contains basic project information. **Section II** identifies environmental factors significantly adversely affected by the proposed project. **Section III** presents the lead agencies determination of which CEQA required document is appropriate given the findings of the impact evaluation presented in this initial study. **Section IV** presents those findings in checklist format. The checklist lists environmental factors potentially affected by the proposed project and identifies whether or not the project will have a significant impact on those factors. Following each determination is an explanation of that determination and a description of any mitigation measures needed to reduce the level of impact, as appropriate.

The following designations are used in the environmental checklist to describe the level of potential project impacts:

Potentially Significant Impact: An impact that could be significant and for which no feasible and effective mitigation has been identified. If any potentially significant impacts are identified, an EIR must be prepared.

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated: An impact that requires mitigation to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

Less-Than-Significant Impact: Any impact that would not be considered significant under CEQA relative to identified standards.

No Impact: The project would not have an impact.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM

Section I: Basic Project Information

1. Project Title: 2005 Reclamation Plan for Western Aggregates LLC,
Yuba County Operations
2. Lead Agency Name and Address: California State Mining & Geology Board
801 K Street, Suite 2015
Sacramento, CA 95814
3. Contact Person and Phone Number: Steve Testa
Executive Officer, SMGB
(916) 322-1082
4. Project Location: Yuba County, California
5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address: Western Aggregates LLC
P.O. Box 829
Marysville, California
95901
6. General Plan Designation: Extractive Industrial
7. Zoning: Mineral Resource
8. Description of Project: Aggregate Mine Reclamation Plan
9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

Land surrounding the project is characterized by existing aggregate mine operations, agricultural production and cattle grazing to the west and south. The Yuba River runs one mile north of the proposed project's northern boundary, beyond which are the Yuba Goldfields (historical dredger tailings). To the east are vacant cattle grazing lands. Beale Air Force Base is located to the south of the Goldfields.
10. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required: None

SECTION II: ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | |

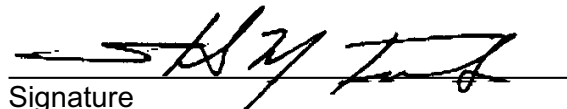
Based on the findings presented in Section 3, the proposed project may have a significant impact on some of the identified factors. These issues will be further analyzed in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Section III. Determination

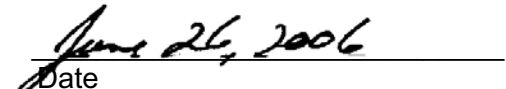
This section presents the determination that the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) concluded that, based on the results of the environmental review presented in this Initial Study, the preparation of an EIR is appropriate under the environmental review requirements for the proposed project under CEQA.

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the Proposed Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that although the Proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the applicant. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find that the Proposed Project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR OR NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.


 Signature
 Steve Testa

Stephen M. Testa
 Printed Name


 Date
 State Mining and Geology Board
 (SMGB)

SMGB
 For

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
1. LAND USE AND PLANNING.				
<i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating on environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. The project site consists primarily of previously or currently mined land within unincorporated Yuba County. The site is bounded by the Yuba Goldfields, Yuba River (one mile north), agriculture, grazing land, and other active mine sites. There are no developed or established residential communities within the surrounding area. Reclamation of the project site would not divide an established community. Therefore, there would be **no impact**.
- b. The project site is currently designated as "Extractive Industrial" by the Yuba County General Plan. The Extractive Industrial designation identifies "areas where significant and commercially viable mineral and aggregate resources are located and to protect those areas from the encroachment of incompatible uses".² Examples of permitted uses include, but are not limited to: surface and underground mining; quarrying; dredging; oil and gas exploration and development; concrete and asphalt production and distribution; limited active and passive recreational uses; and agricultural uses.³ The General Plan Open Space and Conservation Elements designates the site as a Mineral Resource.⁴ The current zoning designation is "Extractive Industrial" (M-2). The project site is also designated as Mineral Resource Zone 2 (MRZ-2) by the California Geological Survey.

Following completion of reclamation activities, there will be a series of lakes varying in size within which there will be a number of varied island habitats. This condition would be consistent with the General Plan's Extractive Industrial designation and with the current zoning designation.

The proposed project is noted in the Beale Air Force Base Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Beale AFB CLUP) as being within the Overflight Zone on the Beale AFB Area of

2 Yuba County General Plan, Land Use Element, December 1996, page 5-15.

3 Yuba County General Plan, Land Use Element, December 1996, page 5-15.

4 Yuba County General Plan, Open Space and Conservation Element, December 1996, Figure 7-1.

Influence map and within the Noise Contours. The reclamation of the project site does not include the construction of any new water bodies. Water bodies do exist on site, and new water bodies will be created during the remaining years of the mining operation.

Existing water bodies, resulting from the mining process, would be re-contoured and re-vegetated to restore the site to a more natural setting. Revegetation of the project site would provide some habitat for birds. However, revegetation areas in the project site are not expected to attract significant numbers of birds above the number of birds attracted by the large water bodies.

The proposed project site appears to be primarily located within the 60 and 80 CNEL contours.⁵ These contours provide that “measures to achieve an interior noise level of 50 CNEL must be incorporated into the design and construction of portions of buildings where the public is received, office areas and other areas where people work or congregate”.⁶ No buildings are proposed as a part of the proposed project; therefore, no conflict would occur.

The proposed project would convert the mined areas into a series of islands and lakes bordered by vegetated woodlands, and with permanent shorelines. Therefore, reclamation of the mine and re-designation of the zoning would not conflict with the Yuba County General Plan, the Yuba County Zoning Ordinance, or the Beale AFB CLUP. For the above reasons, impacts would be **less than significant**.

- c. The project site is not within the boundaries of a habitat conservation plan or a natural community conservation plan. Therefore, there would be **no impact**.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
2. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES: <i>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:</i>				
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program in the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

5 Airport Land Use Commission, Beale Air Force Base Comprehensive Land Use Plan, June 1987 Amended December 1992, Figure 12, page 34.

6 Airport Land Use Commission, Beale Air Force Base Comprehensive Land Use Plan, June 1987 Amended December 1992, Figure 12, page 32-33.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a-c. The project site is not designated as prime, unique, or farmland of statewide importance and is not under a Williamson Act contract.⁷ The project site is currently zoned "Extractive Industrial" (M-2). Lands under the Williamson Act must be zoned for agriculture, and the Western Aggregates mining site is not zoned for agriculture.

The project site is currently designated as "Extractive Industrial" by the Yuba County General Plan, which applies to areas of valuable mineral or aggregate resource. Agricultural/Rural Residential designated land surrounds the majority of the project site. The reclamation of the Western Aggregates mine would not convert significant agricultural lands, conflict with existing zoning, or potentially convert surrounding lands from agricultural uses. Therefore, there would be **no impact** under the above-mentioned items a, b and c.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
3. POPULATION AND HOUSING. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

⁷ California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, *Yuba County Important Farmland, 1996*.

Discussion

- a. The proposed project would result in the reclamation of an approved mining site and would not include the construction of new homes, new businesses, or modify existing infrastructure. No new streets would be constructed, widened or extended as a result of the proposed project. The proposed project would be implemented in an undeveloped portion of the north Central Valley where there are few residences. The proposed project would periodically add jobs to the area because workers would be needed to carry out site reclamation. However, the addition of jobs would be temporary and no permanent jobs would be added to the area. Therefore, the impact would be ***less than significant***.
- b, c. All physical changes resulting from the proposed project would occur on property that would not have residential units, and the proposed project would not displace existing people or housing, or require the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, ***no impact*** would occur.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
4. GEOLOGY AND SOILS. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist - Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in substantial soil erosion, or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on-or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
d. Be located on expansive soils, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

a.i., a.ii.

a.iii The closest known faults to the project site, mapped by the California Division of Mines and Geology, are the Cleveland Hill West, Cleveland Hill East/Paynes Peak/Swain Ravine, and the Prairie Creek/Spencerville/Deadman Faults of the Foothills fault system, located approximately 12 miles east of the project site. The nearest mapped active fault to the project site is the Cleveland Hill fault, located approximately 24 miles to the northeast. There are no known active faults identified on the project site and the potential for strong seismic ground shaking is low. The project site is not located within an Alquist - Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone (previously called Special Study Zones).⁸

The structural integrity of the final mine slopes was analyzed under current conditions at the project site. Under these conditions, the slope stability of the final design of the project site meets applicable seismic safety standards. To ensure that these standards are met, final configurations for all reclaimed slopes will be no steeper than 2:1 horizontal:vertical (H:V), unless, prior to certification of final environmental documentation for the 2005 Reclamation Plan, the project applicant submits a slope stability analysis demonstrating that proposed slopes on the Western Aggregates' site, including where appropriate, slopes steeper than 2:1H:V, meets all applicable safety standards. Therefore, impacts from exposure to hazards associated with fault rupture and groundshaking, and seismically induced liquefaction are considered ***less than significant***.

a.iv, c. The project site is located about one mile to the south of the Yuba River in an area that was likely relative flat prior to the advent of gold dredging operations in the last century. These dredging operations left much of the project site covered with tailings piles; some over 80 feet in height. While the historic tailings piles have achieved relatively stable aspects, members of the environmental review team observed that previous and ongoing mining operations have resulted in cuts into tailings piles that have resulted in near vertical slopes in some areas. While this may or may not result in a risk of slope failure and landslide, site reclamation will not occur in areas where such conditions exist. Site reclamation will occur only in areas in which tailings piles have been removed and processed. In addition, the proposed project will not create conditions that will result in slope instability. As noted above, reclaimed slopes will be no steeper than 2:1 (H:V),

⁸ California Geological Survey, Website, Earthquake Fault Zones Affecting Counties, Accessed on October 10, 2005, http://www.consrv.ca.gov/CGS/rghm/ap/Map_index/county.htm. California State Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology, Geologic Map of California (1977) and Fault Activity Map of California and Adjacent Areas (1994).

subject to the exception described above in section a.iii. It is assumed that existing dredger tailings that are not removed by mining will not have slopes steeper than 1.5:1 to retain current stability. Implementation of the reclamation plan will not modify the slope configuration of tailings not effected by mining operations, therefore the impact is considered **less than significant**.

- b. As discussed in *Section 2: Project Description* of this Initial Study, implementation of the proposed reclamation plan would involve removal of mining and processing equipment from the project site, preparation of the mine surface areas and placement of process fines on setback areas from ponds and lakes, and all other areas to support site revegetation. In order to prevent erosion following seeding, appropriate erosion control measures will be implemented which could include sandbags, silt fencing, and erosion control fabric. All erosion control measures, whether temporary or permanent, would be constructed or placed to direct runoff to designated stormwater drainage features (see Item 5: Hydrology and Water Quality of this checklist). Therefore, impacts associated with erosion are considered **less than significant**.
- d. The proposed project would not build structures or expose people to risks from expansive soils. Therefore, implementation of the project would have **no impact**.
- e. The proposed project would not generate wastewater. No sewer facilities are proposed; therefore, **no impact** would occur.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
5. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY				
<i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (i.e., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
d.	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e.	Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g.	Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h.	Place within a 100-year floodplain structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i.	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j.	Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

a, c,
e, f.

The proposed project would not result in wastewater discharges or other point-source discharges subject to waste discharge requirements because surface water flows on mined areas within the project site are not connected to the Yuba River or any other surface water body other than existing or proposed mine pits and sedimentation ponds. The project site is surrounded on all sides but the south by tall dredger tailings that prevent stormwater from flowing off-site. Stormwater drainage at the mine currently drains towards the existing mining operation pits, or percolates quickly into the underlying groundwater. Stormwater drainage for the rest of the property drains north towards the Yuba River.

Mining operations at the project site are regulated under the Central Valley Region of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) to comply with Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) set forth in Order No. 5-00-107 for the discharge of wash water into an on-site siltation pond. Reclamation activities would not involve discharge of process water to the mining pits.

During the reclamation process, the grading and ripping of topsoil could temporarily alter drainage patterns at the project site and increase the amount of sediment in stormwater runoff. As a result, stormwater from the project site could discharge increased amounts of sediment into the existing site ponds and lakes, but would not directly discharge to the Yuba River. Inadvertent and/or uncontrolled releases of petroleum products from vehicles and equipment, or stored products such as cements, welding fluids, solvents, or other items could enter the on-site ponds and lakes affecting water quality. However, the proposed project would comply with water quality requirements in WDR Order No. 5-00-107, Water Quality Order No. 91-13-DWQ (as amended) General Permit for Discharges or Stormwater Associated with Industrial Activities, and approved SPCC Plan.

Reclamation activities would include the use of stormwater quality BMPs to prevent fines from eroding off slopes. Western Aggregates would implement an erosion monitoring program to monitor slopes for erosion after heavy rains. According to the reclamation plan, revegetation would occur concurrently with mining operations and take approximately five years to obtain 50 percent coverage for emergent marshes and riparian woodlands and a 75 percent coverage for riparian uplands, which leaves many years where soil is exposed to rain and potential runoff. However, the project site does not contain substantial topsoil and reclamation activities would not import topsoil.

Further, implementation of the proposed project would not increase the volume of stormwater runoff. As described previously in the project description, the revegetation phase of the reclamation plan would increase vegetation on the project site, thereby decreasing the amount of exposed soils and stormwater runoff. The proposed project would not exacerbate existing stormwater runoff volumes and would not have a measurable effect on surface water elevations in the Yuba River. Therefore, the proposed project would have ***less-than-significant impacts*** on stormwater runoff volumes and water quality.

- b. The proposed project would neither involve the extraction of groundwater nor construction of new groundwater wells. Furthermore, the project site would not be covered with impervious surfaces. Therefore, there would be a ***less-than-significant impact*** on the quantity of groundwater supplies.
- d. The proposed project would not alter the existing drainage pattern through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, and thus would have ***no impact*** on or off-site flooding.
- g, h. The proposed project does not include the construction of housing or structures within a 100-year floodplain as designated by a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or FIRM, or any other flood hazard delineation map. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would have ***no impact***.
- i. The "Linda Levee" denotes the northern project boundary. The project site lies within the dam failure inundation area delineated for several dams located upstream.⁹ The majority of dams located upstream are under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD). According to the Yuba County General Plan, these dams have been maintained by the DSOD and have a

9 QUAD Consultants, *Yuba County General Plan Volume I, Environmental Setting and Background*, May, 1994, Figure 2-6.

very low probability of failure.¹⁰ The portion of the project site that would be affected by dam inundation is the strip of land located closest to the river. The southern portion of the plant, the pasture area and access road are outside of the inundation zone. Further, there would be no occupied uses as part of the reclamation project. Therefore, this impact is considered **less than significant**.

- j. Seiches are standing waves created by seismically induced groundshaking (or volcanic eruptions or explosions) that occur in large, freestanding bodies of water. A tsunami is a series of large waves that are caused by earthquakes that occur on the seafloor or in coastal areas. The project site is not located in an area subject to such hazards. Mudflows generally occur in areas having steep slopes of exposed soil. The project site is located in an area with gentle slopes on flat land, interspersed with dredger tailings made of highly permeable cobbles, sand, and gravel. Therefore, mudflows would not be a potential hazard to the project site upon completion of final reclamation. There would be **no impact**.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
6. AIR QUALITY.				
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations:				
<i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	■	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	■	<input type="checkbox"/>

10 QUAD Consultants, *Yuba County General Plan Volume I, Environmental Setting and Background*, May, 1994, pages 2-14 through 2-16.

Discussion

- a-c. Activities associated with project site reclamation could result in **potentially significant impacts** on air quality. Because these potential impacts on air quality have not yet been analyzed, they will be addressed in the Draft EIR.
- d. The project site is located along the Yuba River in a rural area of the Central Valley. Reclamation activities for the proposed project would not occur near sensitive receptors such as residences as there are no such receptors near the site. Furthermore, emissions during reclamation would be temporary, last for a short period of time, and would likely not exceed specified thresholds. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.
- e. The project site is located approximately one mile south of the Yuba River in a rural area of the Central Valley in Yuba County. Because odor causing activities, primarily the operation of diesel-powered equipment, during reclamation would be of short duration and intermittent, users of the Yuba River in the vicinity of the project site may experience occasional odors from diesel equipment exhaust during reclamation activities. This effect would be intermittent, contingent on prevailing wind conditions, and occur only during reclamation activities and would not affect a substantial number of people. Operation of the proposed project would not generate any odors, with the exception of fuel exhaust from landscaping machinery that would be used infrequently. Because the generation of odors would be sporadic and of short durations, and because no sensitive receptors are located near the project site, the impact is considered **less than significant**.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
7. TRANSPORTATION/ CIRCULATION <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
d.	Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g.	Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a, b. Traffic generated by existing mining and processing operations on the project site consists primarily of truck transport of processed materials for sale and employee transport to and from the site. It is assumed that traffic levels of activity will continue until the closure of the Western Aggregates processing plant. Site reclamation under the proposed project will primarily occur concurrently with mining and processing operations. As described in *Section 2: Project Description* of this initial study, reclamation activities will be periodic and temporary. These activities will occur seasonally throughout the life of the project and will involve the limited transport of reclamation personnel and equipment to and from the project site. This traffic will not include heavy equipment or large trucks. These activities are likely to generate no more than 10 trips to and 10 trips from the project site on any given day during peak reclamation activities.

Upon implementation of the final phase of reclamation, the existing processing plant and related structures will be dismantled and removed from the project site. These activities are expected to be several weeks and will generate no more than 10 trips to and from the project site daily. These activities will involve the movement of heavy equipment and the use of large trucks.

Given the relatively small number of trips generated by the proposed project relative to existing mining operations, limited duration of those activities, and existing use of the site for mining operations and materials transport, the proposed project would not substantially affect baseline traffic conditions or capacity of the street system. Therefore, impacts to traffic would be ***less than significant***.

- c. The proposed project would not result in changes to air traffic patterns at Beale AFB because the project would not result in the construction of any structures or air traffic hazards that could affect air traffic patterns. As noted above under Item 1.c (Land Use), the Beale Air Force Base Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Beale AFB CLUP) shows the project site as being within the Overflight Zone on the Beale AFB Area of Influence map and within the Noise Contours. The proposed project does not include the construction of any new water bodies. Water bodies do exist on site, and new water bodies will be created during the remaining years of the mining operation. These water bodies,

however, are considered part of the “environmental baseline” conditions for the proposed reclamation plan and not part of the proposed project itself. Any impact related to the existence or creation of these water bodies, therefore, would not be the result of the proposed reclamation plan. Therefore the project would have a **less-than-significant** impact on flight safety.

- d. The proposed project will require ingress and egress from the project site by vehicles carrying plants and seeds, landscaping materials, and personnel. In the later stages of reclamation heavy equipment and processing facilities will be removed from the site using large trucks. Reclamation activities will generate fewer trips than current and anticipated future operations at the project site associated with the transport of processed aggregate from the project site. Visibility of site entrance from Hammonton-Smartville Road is unimpaired. Given that the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards relative to baseline conditions and is not expected to exacerbate an existing identified hazardous condition, impacts would be **less than significant**.
- e. Reclamation of the project site will remove and reclaim some existing and planned roadways that serve and will serve mining operations. Therefore access to some of the project site will be reduced as a result of site reclamation. Because this access will be removed, concurrently with reclamation, the impact road removal would have on emergency access is considered to be less than significant. The County road that currently runs east from the processing plant and along the southern boundary of the project site would not be affected by implementation of the proposed reclamation plan. Therefore, the impact on emergency access would be **less than significant**.
- f. The proposed project would not adversely affect on- or off-site parking capacity. The proposed project would not remove any existing parking spaces, and no new uses that would require parking would be developed. Parking for reclamation workers would be required periodically. Adequate parking is available at the processing plant or at the site of reclamation activities. Therefore, there would be **no impact**.
- g. The proposed project area does not contain any existing alternative transportation features, such as bus stops, fixed routes for buses, or bicycle routes. The proposed project would not remove any alternative transportation features, or develop uses that could require the use of such facilities. Therefore, there would be **no impact** on alternative transportation plans or facilities.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
--------	--------------------------------	--	------------------------------	-----------

8. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.

Would the project:

- a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	■	□	□	□
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	■	□	□	□
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of wildlife nursery sites?	■	□	□	□
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	□	□	□	■
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	□	□	□	■

Discussion

- a-d. The proposed project could result in **potentially significant** impacts on biological resources in and adjacent to the project site. Because the potential impact of the project on biological resources has not yet been analyzed, this issue will be evaluated in the Draft EIR.
- e. Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with the any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.
- f. Because there is no adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan established for the project area, implementation of the proposed project would have **no impact**.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
9. MINERAL RESOURCES.				
<i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Exceed energy demands significantly more than the current use or conflict with energy conservation plans?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a, b. Implementation of the proposed project would reclaim previously mined areas. As stated in the project description, it is anticipated that mining activities will cease by the year 2055 at the Western Aggregates site. Furthermore, neither the current mining operations nor the possible future uses of the project site would preclude future mining on the property, should any additional recoverable mineral resources be desired for extraction from the site. Therefore, the project would have ***no impact***.
- c. The use of energy for proposed reclamation activities would be substantially less than ongoing mining and processing activities. Impacts would be ***less than significant***.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
10. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.				
<i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a, b. Proposed reclamation activities may require the use, transport, and storage of hazardous materials, which could expose people or the environment to associated risks during their transport, use, storage, or disposal. This could result in a ***potentially significant impact***. Therefore, impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials will be further evaluated in the Draft EIR.
- c. There are no schools located within one-quarter mile of the project site. Therefore, there would be ***no impact***.

- d. The project site is not included on the list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.¹¹ There are no deed restrictions or environmental protection liens recorded for the property that indicate the site had been subject to any cleanup orders imposed by a federal, State, or local agency. Implementation of the proposed project would have **no impact**.
- e, f. There are no public or private airports within two miles of the project site. However, the project site is within the overflight zone of Beale AFB. While there are aircraft overflights, reclamation activities would not result in a safety hazard for people working within the project site and would not conflict with the Beale AFB CLUP in a manner that would create safety considerations (see Item 1: Land Use and Planning in this Initial Study Checklist). Therefore, there would be **no impact**.
- g. Access to the project site is from Hammonton-Smartville Road. The proposed project would not alter the design or geometrics of any public roadways. Staging for reclamation activities would be on-site. Heavy equipment and reclamation vehicles would use these roads to enter or exit the project site, but traffic disruption from reclamation activities on Hammonton-Smartville Road, if any, would be temporary and short-term and not substantially different than those associated with ongoing mining processing operations. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. This is a **less-than-significant impact**.
- h. Reclamation of the project site would occur on an existing mined area with large ponds surrounded by irrigated agricultural fields, other mining operations, and approximately one mile south of the Yuba River. The Yuba River supports a broad band of riparian woodland and grassland that extends east and west of the project site. Large areas of grasslands extend to the east of the project site that could provide fuel for wildland fires in the vicinity. Compliance with existing State and local fire safety regulations and standards during reclamation and revegetation of the project site would reduce the risk of fire hazard due to inadvertent releases of flammable materials. This impact is considered **less than significant**.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
11. NOISE. <i>Would the project result in:</i>				
a. Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11 California Department of Toxic Substances Control, Hazardous Materials Sites Database, on website: <http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/database/Calsites/calf2002.cfm>. California State Water Resources Control Board, GeoTracker, on website: <http://www.geotracker.swrcb.ca.gov>. California State Water Resources Control Board, Enforcement Order Document Search, on website at: http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/enforcement/docs/ind/search_orders.html. California State Water Resources Control Board, Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, on website: http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb5/available_documents/ug_tanks/LUST.pdf. California State Water Resources Control Board, Solid Waste Information System (SWIS), on website: <http://www.ciwmmb.ca.gov/SWIS/>. All websites were accessed on October 10, 2005.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
b. Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a-e. Implementation of Reclamation Plan 2005 would require the operation of earth moving equipment to backfill and contour final reclaimed slopes to specifications presented in the plan. In addition, re-soiling and re-vegetation activities will require personnel and the periodic importation of planting materials to the project site.

After discussions with the project applicant¹², the use of heavy equipment for the purposes of site reclamation activities will not be additive to noise generated by ongoing mining activities. According to the project applicant, equipment now used for mining will be diverted to reclamation activities, as needed, during the life of the project. As such, grading, contouring and re-soiling activities will have no impact on baseline noise conditions that now occur on the project site related to site mining excavation activities. The importation of materials to the project site will involve periodic truck trips to and from the project site. These trucks will include pick-ups and "flatbeds" but not the large tractor-trailer trucks used to haul processed aggregate to and from the project site. As such, these periodic trips are not expected to significantly affect baseline noise conditions on access routes to the Western Aggregates site.

For the reasons presented above, and because the project site is isolated from any sensitive receptors such as residences, schools, or hospitals, the potential impact of the project due to noise is considered to be **less than significant**.

12 Strong, Alan. President, Western Aggregates LLC with R. Hanson, EIP Associates. Personal communication. March 13, 2006.

- f. The project is not in the vicinity of private air strip; therefore, there is **no impact**.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
12. PUBLIC SERVICES. <i>Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:</i>				
a. Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a, b. The Yuba County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services, and the California Department of Forestry (CDF) provides fire suppression services to the project area. The nearest Sheriff's Department office is located at 215 Fifth Street in Marysville. The closest CDF station to the project site is located in Smartville.

The proposed project would not result in the development of housing or otherwise increase the population of the County. Therefore, there would not be a need to increase law enforcement or fire department staffing levels or equipment. Because the site is located adjacent to the Yuba River where there are frequently recreational users, a locked gate would remain at the site entrance to prevent accidental entry to the site. In the event that there was trespassing on the site, the Sheriff's Department would be the responding entity.

The site would be revegetated with trees, shrubs, and plants. Lightning rarely strikes in this area during storms. If a lightning strike in the project area caused a fire that would need to be suppressed, CDF would be the responding entity.

Because the proposed project would not result in the need for increased staffing levels or equipment for police protection or fire suppression, the impact would be **less than significant**.

- c-e. Reclamation of the project site would not result in the development of housing or otherwise increase the population of the County. Therefore, there would be no demand for schools, parks, or other public facilities, and there would be **no impact**.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
13. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS.				
<i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes, and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a,b,e. Reclamation of the project site would result in the revegetation of specific areas surrounding lakes with native trees, shrubs, and plants. Reclamation of the project site would not result in the development of housing or otherwise increase the population of the County. No new structures would be erected on the site. There would be no need for water or wastewater service onsite. Therefore, no expansion of existing or construction of new water or wastewater facilities would be required, and wastewater

treatment requirements would not be exceeded. There would be **no impact** on water or wastewater services.

- c. Stormwater flows along natural grades to the central part of the project site or into existing water bodies. Thus, the proposed project does not include stormwater runoff control measures to reduce runoff to receiving waters. No storm drainage facilities would be constructed onsite. In addition, portions of the project site would be revegetated with native trees and plant species which would stabilize soils and reduce the amount of stormwater runoff produced. The proposed project would not result in the introduction of impervious surfaces to the area, and therefore would not produce substantial amounts of runoff while retaining all stormwater runoff onsite. The expansion of existing or construction of new storm drainage facilities would not be required, and the impact would be **less than significant**.
- d. The proposed project would not construct uses that would require a public water supply. The revegetation of the area would require a water supply, as the area would be irrigated. However, water supply for irrigation would be pumped from on-site ponds until vegetation is mature. No uses demanding water, such as the main plant building, would remain on the site after the cessation of mining activities. Because no water would be required onsite, new or expanded water entitlements are not needed, and there would be **no impact** on water supply.
- f, g. Reclamation of the project site would result in the revegetation of specific areas with native trees, shrubs, and plants. There would be no waste product created by revegetating the areas because the silts or fine-grained clays and sand that are saved onsite would be used to stabilize slopes and provide topsoil for the introduced plants. The only solid waste that would be created by reclamation is the demolition and removal of the existing main plant building and other associated structures. Debris from these structures would be hauled to the Yuba Sutter Disposal, Inc. landfill in Marysville or recycled to the extent practicable.¹³ The debris from the demolition of these structures would be minimal and finite, and would not adversely affect the landfill's capacity. The collection and disposal of this solid waste would be in accordance with federal, State, and local regulations related to solid waste.

Any hazardous materials that would be disposed of during reclamation would be required to adhere to all federal, State, and local regulations. As mentioned previously in Item 10: Hazards and Hazardous Materials, impacts related to hazardous materials will be addressed in the Draft EIR. No long-term solid waste would be generated by the reclamation of the site. Although solid waste disposal could involve hazardous materials, the proposed project would be required to follow all federal, State, and local regulations regarding solid waste disposal. Therefore, because solid waste generated would not adversely affect the capacity of the landfill, and the proposed project would not violate solid waste regulations, impacts would be **less than significant**.

13 California Integrated Waste Management Board Landfill Facility Database, <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/SWIS/SiteListing.asp?VW=SWISNO&OUT=HTML&PG=INV&COUNTY=Yuba&NAME=&FAC=&OPSTATUS=®STATUS=&LEA=> accessed October 10, 2005.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
14. AESTHETICS. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

a, c. Views from the Project Site

Views from the project site are limited due to the topography of the site. Currently, the 1,200-acre project site is mined for aggregate (sand and gravel). Mining facilities on the site include a processing and storage facility, fuel storage and containment area, administrative offices, maintenance structures, a scalehouse, a shop building, a fuel island, and stockpile areas. The project site is located in the historic Yuba Goldfields, which has resulted in mining activity on the site, off and on since the early 1900s. These activities have resulted in a highly disturbed site with limited vegetation except on the border of the site. Views from the project site are limited by this vegetation as well as tailings berms along the Yuba River. There are no residential structures that are visible from the boundary of the project site.

Views onto the Project Site

Views onto the project site are also limited due to the topography of the site. The remaining vegetation as well as berms along the northern site boundary limits views of the site from surrounding properties. The proposed reclamation of the project site would alter the existing and future visual character of the site from a disturbed mining site to an island, lake and woodland habitat condition, consisting of a variety of open water and wildlife habitats, which are designed to enhance the aesthetic value of the historically disturbed site's characteristics. Ongoing mining operations currently keep a large portion of the site in a disturbed state.

Mining operations would continue through the projected 50-year life of the project with reclamation occurring in phases. The mining plan avoids designated areas of existing quality habitat. The reclamation plan includes the creation of several water bodies and installation of riparian habitat.

Although the proposed project would alter the visual character of the project site, this alteration is not considered a significant degradation in the character of the site because the site will ultimately be reclaimed as described above. The proposed future removal of the mining equipment and the reclamation of that site also will result in the long-term improvement of the visual character of the project site, as part of the proposed reclamation process. The island, lake and woodland habitat condition following reclamation activities would be similar in visual quality and compatibility with surrounding uses and thus would not “substantially degrade” the existing visual character of the project site and its surroundings, but would improve the site. Therefore, benefits to the on- and off-site visual character of the project site would result in **no impact**.

- b. Hammonton-Smartville Road and SR 20 (north of the project site) are not designated as scenic routes by the California Scenic Highway Program.¹⁴ Therefore, the proposed project would have **no impact** on a State scenic highway.
- d. Reclamation of the mine would revegetate specific areas to a natural setting and would not construct buildings or other uses that would require lighting or create glare. The area would have naturally occurring trees, shrubs, and plants. No lights and no building surfaces that could create glare would be installed. Therefore, there would be **no impact**.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
15. CULTURAL RESOURCES. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in '15064.5?	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to '15064.5?	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or unique geologic feature?	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a-d. Despite the low likelihood of encountering cultural resources on the project site, the possibility remains that buried remnants and isolated surface evidence may exist. Therefore, the potential impact of the project on pre-historic and historic resources and archeological remains is considered a **potentially significant impact**. Because the

¹⁴ California Scenic Highway Program website, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm, accessed on October 10, 2005.

potential impact on cultural resources has not yet been analyzed, the impact will be addressed in the Draft EIR.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
16. RECREATION.				
a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a, b. As stated in Item 3 (a and b), the proposed project would not cause an increase in population and therefore would not generate an increase in demand for neighborhood or regional parks or other recreation facilities. Also, no existing recreational opportunities exist on any portion of the proposed project site. Following reclamation, the project site could be zoned as open space and could provide future recreational opportunities. However, the proposed project does not include structural enhancements for recreation. Therefore, ***no impact*** would occur.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
17. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.				
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	■	□	□	□
c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	■	□	□	□

Discussion

- a. The proposed project would implement a mining reclamation plan for the approved Western Aggregates mine site concurrently with mining and processing activities at the site. Completion of mining operations and the closure of processing operations within the 2005 Reclamation Plan boundary are proposed to be terminated approximately 50 years from approval of the Reclamation Plan. The actual time frame for termination is dependent on market conditions and other economic factors (e.g., demand and competition), reserves, ultimate mining depths, and quality of mined material. Site reclamation activities would occur concurrently with mining/processing operations according to the proposed reclamation plan. The proposed project is detailed in *Section 2, Project Description* of this Initial Study and involves the removal of processing and mining equipment from the project site; the redistribution of stockpiled "fines" from settling ponds to pond and lake shores, and other disturbed flat areas on the mine site; the ripping and grading of those areas; and site revegetation. This initial study identified potential long-term impacts associated with the 2005 Reclamation Plan that require further analysis.

Short-term potential impacts associated with the proposed project could affect the possible establishment of special status plant and animal species on the project site over time. These species might be adversely affected by reclamation activities and mitigation measures are available to reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

In addition, the initial study recognizes that the project site may contain previously undiscovered resources of cultural significance that may be adversely affected by reclamation activities. Because impact analyses for these issues have not been performed, the Draft EIR will provide analysis of these potential impacts and mitigation measures if needed.

- b. Implementation of the proposed project would require facilities removal, transport of facilities and equipment off-site, site grading and revegetation. These activities could result in short-term impacts on air quality, biological resources, cultural resources and hazards. As shown in the preceding checklist sections, implementation of the 2005 Reclamation Plan would also result in a number of impacts that were found to be individually less than significant such as noise generation and aesthetic impact. As

noted above, because analyses have not yet been performed, further analysis of potential impacts for a number of these issue areas will be conducted and presented in the Draft EIR along with mitigation measures if needed. Impacts found to be potentially significant or less than significant individually may be cumulatively considerable when added to the impact of past, ongoing and future projects such as ongoing mining operations at the Western Aggregates site and other mining operations in the vicinity of the Western Aggregates site. This impact is considered potentially significant, and requires additional analysis in the EIR.

- c. This initial study finds that potential direct and indirect impacts of the proposed project on human beings related to issues such as land use, transportation, recreation, mineral resources, aesthetics, noise, and public utilities and services are less than significant. However, impacts related to air quality, hazards and hazardous materials, biological resources, and cultural resources were found to be potentially significant. These issues will be further analyzed in the Draft EIR.